


REMARKS

Please enter the above amendments prior to consideration of the merits of the present application.

A copy of the amended portion of the specification with changes marked therein is attached and entitled "*Version with Markings to Show Changes Made.*"

Respectfully submitted,

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A CONTENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND A REFERENCE SERVER

This application is a continuation-in-part under 35 U.S.C. section 120 of U.S. application Serial No. 09/453,528 filed December 3, 1999 which is incorporated herein by reference.

The present invention relates to a content distribution
5 system for realizing a content distribution service including
a distribution server for fee-paying distribution of digital
contents, and a reference server.

BACKGROUND ART

Content distribution services used for fee-paying
10 distribution of digital contents are one of a number of
network businesses at present receiving a great deal of
attention from the music industry. An example of such a
service is Electronic Music Distribution (EMD). A large
number of corporations and individuals are participating in
15 EMD, with the aim of taking advantage of the new business
opportunities that it offers. A conventional distribution
system that realizes EMD includes a user terminal, a
distribution server, and a billing server. Such a system
distributes music contents for a fee, the music contents
20 having been encoded using an audio compression codec such as
MP3 (Moving Picture Experts Group 1 Audio Layer 3), Dolby AC-3
(Digital Audio Compression) or AAC (Advanced Audio Coding).

A user accesses a Web site by inputting an URL (Uniform